

THE LOST CHILD.

A CHINESE STORY.

[THE tale, entitled "Sea-lou (Little-chamber) the Lost Child," is one of the most popular of Chinese fictions, and fairly indicates the state of intellectual activity prevailing over that extensive and thickly populated empire. The very inanity of the story, with its marvellous coincidences, is significant to our Western minds, while its details afford interesting glimpses of the semi-civilized state of the Chinese people. It is abstracted, rather than translated; but the spirit, characteristic phrases, and curious Chinese tone of thought of the original have been preserved as closely as possible in the following version.]



I N a certain district, in the province of Kwantung, there lived a gentleman named Lien, possessed of considerable wealth; not acquired, however, by either official exactions, or the chicaneries of traffic, but by his ancestors' and his own industry in cultivating the soil. He was married to a lady of great domestic virtues: wealth established their house, prudence regulated their conduct; and the calm current of their happiness was unruffled, save by one unfortunate circumstance—they had no children. Attributing this misfortune to the unpropitious form of his abode, Lien added to the paternal mansion a small apartment, having many lucky angles and corners; and, accordingly, in course of time, in this very room, a son was born to him. In grateful acknowledgment of the beneficial effect of the lucky corners, Lien named his son Sea-lou—the Little-chamber. The boy grew, and thrived apace, till between three and four years old, when, happening one evening to go out to play with other children, he did not return home at night. Search

was immediately made in every direction, and continued for many days, but without success; so, at last, the disconsolate parents were reluctantly forced to conclude that their darling son had been devoured by a tiger then infesting the district. Lien, being a wealthy man, had many friends to condole with him in his distress. They advised him to pray to Buddha for another son; but he replied, that he had already wearied his mouth in fruitless prayer. Then they advised him to adopt a son; this he also refused to do, alleging that an adopted child could never essentially become like his own, and would ultimately found a family on his wealth; moreover, that, at his death, the adopted, though becoming the master of his household, would not grieve for him.

"It is not right," he continued, "that I should give the property acquired by myself and ancestors to an entire stranger. But I will wait till I find a young person who has a true affection for me; and I will not adopt one before I have received ample proofs of such affection, and satisfied my heart that I really have secured it."

Lien's friends were not altogether disinterested advisers: they all had children, and any one of them would gladly have allowed the rich agriculturist to adopt a son. Several boys, too, about this time seemed all at once to become wonderfully fond of the childless old man. So, one day, Lien said to his wife:

"The people of this place, knowing that my property is fat and thick, and that I have not decided on adopting a child, are continually pestering me with advice upon the matter, and letting down all manner of baits and hooks to deceive me and catch my wealth. I intend, therefore, to travel into a distant country, in order to endeavour to find some one, by land or water, who may evince

a true affection for me. I may be lucky enough to find a suitable person, who, by showing a sincere heart towards me, may, on his part, be lucky enough to become my adopted son."

The project meeting his wife's approbation, Lien, as soon as he had settled his plums—that is to say, arranged his affairs,—started off on his journey. When he had reached a considerable distance from home, he threw off the garb and character of a well-to-do Chinese gentleman, and assumed the appearance of a beggar, who wished to sell himself as a slave. The various persons he met by the way, reasoned with him, saying that he was unfit to be either a labourer, domestic servant, or tutor,—that, in short, no one would purchase a helpless old man like him. To this Lien invariably replied:

"It is true my years are many, and that I am not worth a hair as a labourer, domestic servant, or tutor; but the purchaser I seek is a wealthy orphan, to whom I could act in the capacity of a father, by taking care of his money and pro-

perty, managing his affairs, and regulating his household."

Then the strangers, with much laughter, would say:

"You have an oily mouth, old man; but you will not succeed in this country!"

And passed on their way, wondering whether he were a rogue or a simpleton.

After long and painful travel, Lien, not finding a wealthy orphan to purchase him, determined to try another course. Buying a piece of white cotton cloth, he wrote on it, in large and distinct characters, the following words:

"THIS ELDERLY GENTLEMAN IS DESIROUS TO SELL HIMSELF TO SOME YOUNG MAN, IN ORDER TO BECOME HIS FATHER. THE PRICE IS TEN DOLLARS ONLY. FROM THE DAY OF SALE THE SELLER WILL ENTER INTO THE MOST FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE PURCHASER, WHO SHALL NEVER HAVE REASON TO REPENT OF HIS BARGAIN."

Lien placed this placard on his breast; and, travelling onwards, was saluted by deriding shouts, coarse jeers, and contemptuous laughter from all who met him. Nothing dismayed, however, he still kept on his way, passing through towns and villages, though hooted and pelted at by all the rabble. One day, at length, as he was sitting in the market-place of the city of Hwan-Shing, surrounded as usual by an insulting mob, a tall, well-dressed, young man, of benevolent countenance, pushed through the crowd to learn what might be the matter. The young man presenting a fresh butt for the vulgar witticisms of the mob, they cried to him:

"Hullo, sir! you are very charitable and compassionate to widows and orphans. Pull out your purse, pay ten dollars, and have a father."

While others cried:

"What does the greedy old rogue want with ten dollars? since whoever may be fool enough to buy him will assuredly have to keep him!"

The young man, however, was too much struck by the shrewd but amiable features of Lien, and the extraordinary nature of the placard, to pay any attention to the rude ribaldry of the rabble. Musing, he thought:

"If this old man should really prove a true father to me! I ought to buy him, and thus obtain a renown for benevolence for one hundred years. But he may have relatives, who might some day recognise and claim him."

To the question if he had any relatives, Lien answered that he had not. To all other questions he did not answer, but merely pointed to the words on the placard—"The purchaser shall never have reason to repent of his bargain." Without saying more, the young man gave Lien ten dollars. Then the latter tore the placard off his breast, and put it in the hands of the young man, as a receipt in full, thus consummating the bargain after the Chinese fashion. Then the young man, seizing his newly purchased father by the arm, led him through the uproarious crowd to the nearest wine-shop, where, seating him in the place of honour, he put a pot of rich warm wine in his hands with all due filial reverence. The rabble followed, shouting as they ran:

"Is this old man a god, a devil, or an ass, that

he should lead the sharpest young broker in our city into so foolish a bargain?"

But the broker soon quieted them, by giving the wine-shop keeper some silver to treat them all round, in honour of the joyous occasion; and then, calling a sedan-chair, he took Lien home to his house.

Lien was well pleased to find that his new son's house was evidently the dwelling of a prosperous merchant. On entering, the young man led him to the seat of honour; and, after performing the four reverences which Chinese etiquette demands from a son to a father, begged to inquire his name and history. But Lien was a genuine Chinaman, and accordingly gave a very patchy and muddy, or, in plain English, a very false account of himself. The young man, in return, and speaking truthfully, said that his name was Yaou, and he was the son of one Kwe, formerly a rice-merchant in the city of Hwo-Kwang. He had lost his parents when young, and, consequently, began the world early in life as an apprentice to a travelling silk-dealer. Having acquired a knowledge of the business, and a peculiar skill in estimating the value of different qualities of silk, his master frequently entrusted him with small ventures and commissions; so, by care and industry, he was soon enabled to set up for himself; and now, though only twenty-two years of age, he was one of the leading silk-brokers in Hwan-Shing.

Lien was highly gratified to find that he had obtained so promising a son; but, with the characteristic cunning of his race, he determined to learn more about Yaou, before he disclosed his real name, great wealth, and high position in society. Day by day, however, the silk-broker's excellent disposition and energetic business habits became more apparent, and Lien was almost tempted to reveal his true history when, all at once, news arrived that the rebel army was in full march towards Hwan-Shing, with the intention of sacking, if not totally destroying, the doomed city. Yaou, on hearing this alarming intelligence, asked Lien's advice as to how they should act. Lien advised that Yaou should sell off all his goods as soon as possible, and, with the proceeds concealed on their persons, the two should travel about, disguised as beggars, until tranquillity should be restored. To this Yaou warmly replied, that the hardships and fatigue of such a mode of action would seriously injure, or perhaps kill, so aged a man as Lien; and that, for his own part, he would rather remain in the city, and endeavour to compound with the rebels, even if he lost all his property, than allow his venerable father to suffer such privations. This melted Lien's heart. He acknowledged that he was a wealthy gentleman, and declared that Yaou should be his heir. Their plan was soon arranged. That very day Yaou sold all his goods, and the two embarked in a passage-boat, their destination being Lien's house.

When the boat had started, and the adopted father and son had once more, after the hurry of their departure, an opportunity of quiet converse together, Lien asked the other how it was that he had never married. Yaou replied that

he had intended to marry a certain lady, but now of course he must be entirely ruled by his respected parent's wishes. Lien rejoined that if the rank and fortune of the lady were suitable, he could have no possible objections. Yaou then told him that the lady's name was Faw-wang, and she was the daughter of his old master, the silk-merchant; that they had long loved each other, but on account of his youth and want of fortune her parents would not allow their marriage to take place. After some further conversation on the matter, it was agreed that, as there

was a landing-place, at which the boat stopped to take in and discharge passengers, close by where Faw-wang lived, Yaou should take the opportunity to run up to see her; and if she were still unmarried, and willing to come with him, he was to bring her to the boat, and they would all go home to Lien's house merrily together. But, on reaching the landing-place, the other passengers, alarmed by reports of the proximity and dreadful atrocities of the rebels, would not allow the boat to stop any longer time than was merely necessary to land such travellers as wished. To



the expostulations of Lien, who spoke of his son's particular business, the passengers turned a deaf ear, exclaiming that time pressed, and every one had his own business to do; that the traveller never knew whether life or death, preservation or destruction, depended on the rate he travelled; and they concluded by observing:

"When we took our passage we made no bargain about waiting for you."

This last was decisive.

So as nothing better could be done, under the circumstances, Lien, who in his capacity of father, carried the joint purse, gave Yaou one hundred ounces of gold, with which he jumped on shore to arrange the marriage; while the old gentleman proceeded homewards, in the boat, to prepare a grand festival for the reception of the bride and bridegroom. But scarcely had the boat again started, when Lien, with great vexation, recollected the very patchy and muddy account he had given

of himself to his adopted son; and, also, that though he had since acknowledged his wealth and position in society, he had never told Yaou his real name and place of residence. His natural shrewdness, however, did him good service in this dilemma. When the boat reached its destination, he caused a number of placards to be printed and posted, in various conspicuous positions, on the roads most likely to be travelled by his adopted son, and these placards, couched in ambiguous language, so as to be understood by Yaou alone, were intended to inform him respecting his adopted father's real name and address. Having accomplished this, Lien proceeded on his homeward journey.

Yaou, as soon as he had landed, hurried off on the wings of expectation to the dwelling of the silk-dealer; but, to his consternation, soon found that it had been burned by the rebels; and, on

making further inquiries, learned that all the family had been murdered, with the exception of the fair Faw-wang, whom the rebels had carried off in captivity. Sorrowfully enough, then, Yaou turned his steps towards his adopted father's house, as he thought; but, in reality, in quite another direction, according to the false statement made by Lien.

After travelling a day's journey, he came to the bank of a river, where a large crowd was assembled. On asking what caused the assemblage of so many persons in that particular spot, he was told that a party of the rebels were then and there holding a *hong*, or market, to dispose of their plunder and prisoners. Thinking that Faw-wang might probably be among the captives, Yaou entered the market, but soon discovered that the rebels were keen dealers. For, apprehending that if their female captives' faces were seen, the purchasers would invariably select the youngest and best looking; the rebels placed a sack over the head of each prisoner, drawing it down as far as the hands, and sold the whole for one price all round.

As there was no help for it, Yaou purchased one that seemed to him the youngest and most likely looking of the captives; but, to the great and vociferous amusement of the by-standers, when the sack was taken off her head, she proved to be a venerable matron, between fifty and sixty years of age. Still, as the appearance of the old lady was respectable, and her countenance betokened an amiable disposition, Yaou did not altogether repent of his bargain. Taking into consideration that he had purchased a wealthy father for only ten dollars, he thought that possibly this bargain might turn out a good one also. Moreover, recollecting that Lien had positively declared that he had no relatives, Yaou considered that the respectable-looking old lady might make a capital wife for his adopted father. Accordingly, he asked her if she had a son, and being answered in the negative, he proposed to adopt her as his mother. She agreeing, he immediately performed the four reverences to her, and the other ceremonies of adoption. The old lady, then, to show her gratitude drew Yaou to one side, and informed him that among the captives still unsold there was a maiden as beautiful as the day.

"It may be so, mother," he replied, "but how am I to find her. I cannot see through a sack."

"Listen," rejoined the old lady, "the damsel of whom I speak has an implement of jade-stone—from which, I heard her say, nothing but death should part her—this she has concealed in one of the sleeves of her dress. Go, then, among the captives, use your eyes discreetly, and probably you may discover some indications of this jade implement."

Yaou went, and soon perceived the end of the jade-stone peeping out, as it were, at the place where the sack was tied round one of the captive's wrists. Nay, more, he recognised it to be a jade silk-measure that he had himself given to Faw-wang in former and happier days. He, at once, purchased the captive, and sure enough, when the sack was taken from her head, she proved to be

Faw-wang herself, to the great delight and happiness of them both.

Accompanied by his bride and adopted mother, Yaou again set off with the intention of proceeding to Lien's house; but, as before, and from the same reason, going in quite a contrary direction. After travelling a short distance, however, he espied one of the placards that had been put up by Lien, which, from its ambiguous wording, being utterly unable to comprehend, brought him to a stand-still. His adopted mother, perceiving he was in a dilemma, then said:

"Why should my son travel farther, if he be uncertain of his way? My house is but a short distance from this place, let us go thither for the present."

Yaou agreed to this proposition, and they all embarked in a boat, which soon took them to a wide lake—so wide that the shades of the evening closed round the party, ere they had crossed it. At last, as the boat neared the opposite bank, Yaou was surprised to hear the voice of Lien cry out from the shore:

"Is that my son Yaou's boat?"

But he was still more astonished when he immediately afterwards heard his adopted mother exclaim:

"That is my dear husband's voice!"

For the old lady that Yaou had so fortunately purchased was no other than Lien's wife, who had been carried off by the rebels, previous to the old gentleman's return home.

After the first happy greetings and hurried explanations on the bank of the lake, Lien led the way to his house; and, having ushered Yaou and Faw-wang into the little apartment, with the many lucky corners, gave them formal possession of it, for their own use. On entering the room Yaou was struck with surprise; his eyes eagerly glanced over the windows, doors, tables, seats, bed, and bed-hangings.

"How strange!" he exclaimed. "I have frequently dreamt of a room, exactly resembling this; everything here is quite familiar to me. Am I awake, or do I still dream! I remember, too, that in my dreams I have frequently gone to a recess, concealed by that very curtain at the foot of the bed, and taken from thence a box of toys—a little porcelain horse, a hammer, a ball, and other things, such as children play with."

Lien, too much agitated to speak, drew back the curtain, disclosing the recess and the box of toys, which were immediately recognised by Yaou.

"Of a surety, then," said Lien, "you cannot be any other than my own son, who, escaping the calamity of the tiger, was picked up by a kidnapper, and sold to some childless family."

But Yaou strongly insisted that such could not be the case; for no one had ever told him that he was not the son of Kwe, the rice-merchant, in the city of Hwo-Kwang. Then Faw-wang, who had not previously spoken, said to her husband:

"Everybody in our town well knew that you were not the son of Kwe, the rice-merchant, though nobody liked to tell you so to your face. When you first proposed marriage to me, my parents, seeing you were an industrious and well-

disposed young man, would gladly have consented if you had been the true offspring of Kwe's house, and not a mere purchased brat. That was the true reason why they would not permit our marriage to be solemnised. And now, when you have heard all this, how can you doubt that you are the son of this worthy couple?—that this is the very room in which you were born?"

For some minutes not one of the party could speak. At last, Lien, with an effort, breaking the silence, said:

"We need not long remain in doubt upon this matter. There is a certain means of identification, by a peculiar mark my child had upon his body."

On examination, the mark was found upon Yaou, and then Lien said:

"This day the Imperial Heaven and Queen-like Earth, taking compassion on our collected virtue, have brought us all together to complete our imperfect circle."

Then all, with one accord, having bowed and thanked Heaven and Earth, Lien summoned the servants, and ordered them to make preparations for a grand feast. Four pigs and four sheep were killed in honour of the gods, and to furnish a repast for all the neighbours; before whom Lien acknowledged Yaou to be his legitimate son and heir, who, consequently, took from that time his original name of Sea-lou, or the Little-chamber, though he is still more generally known over all the great celestial, central, flowery empire as THE LOST CHILD.

WILLIAM PINKERTON.

THE WRECK OF THE ALMA.

BY A PASSENGER.

ON the afternoon of Friday the 10th of June, 1859, we were enjoying the kind and courteous hospitalities of the Brigadier-Commandant at his residence on one of the highest spots of the extinguished volcano now called Aden. We talked over the wonderful variety of comforts and conveniences which the facilities of modern communication have brought to that desolate crater from all regions of the world. Suddenly we saw smoke rising in the harbour from the chimney of the beautiful steamer Alma, which had brought us from Point de Galle in the Island of Ceylon; and while she took in coals for the continuation of her homeward voyage, had handed us over to the urbanities of our friends. We had understood she was not to start till Saturday's daybreak—for superstition against a departure on a Friday is still not without its influence among naval men. It was supposed some new arrangement had been made, so we hurried on board. Not, however, on an unlucky Friday, but at sunrise on Saturday the good ship heaved her anchor, making for the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, to dash and perish in the Red Sea on a coral reef on that anniversary Sabbath generally deemed so bright and auspicious—the gayest Sabbath of the year, Whitsunday.

The moon had just gone down, the night was perfectly serene, and the waves of the Arabian gulf tranquil as a lake in summer. It was three o'clock a.m., and except a few who remained on

deck to escape from the intolerable heat below, we had retired to our cabins to seek that repose which is not easily found when the thermometer ranges at or above 90 degrees of Fahrenheit. No dream of danger molested us for a moment. The captain, it is true, had been confined to his cabin by an attack of erysipelas, and had not been visible for two or three days; but the chief officers were in constant communication with him. All had long experience of the Red Sea navigation, and we were provided with admirable charts pointing out every peril, and laying down the safe channels with perfect accuracy. Indeed, disasters have been very uncommon on this well-known and constantly traversed navigation, the highroad for steamers to and from India, China, and Australia, not to speak of the numerous steam-ships of war which are scarcely ever wanting in the great gulf which divides Asia from Africa, whose name is familiar to our earliest associations, connected as it is with some of the most startling and impressive events of biblical history. And yet there was real ground for anxiety. Excepting the officers, there were only four European sailors on board, the crew consisting of Lascars, who, in the sequel, exhibited both cowardice and treachery; for when the Alma struck they jumped into the water, swam to the neighbouring reef, abandoning ship and passengers to their fate, and were afterwards busy in breaking open and robbing the baggage which was saved from the wreck.

There were three fearful crashes, and in a few seconds the vessel heeled over, and floods of water rushed in at the port-holes. We heard the orders given to drive on—to go a-head—in the hope, no doubt, that the reef might be got over, but with fear that if a hole had been made in her bottom, her backing would have taken us into deep water, when she would have gone down perpendicularly, and all must have perished. Everybody rushed forth from their cabins. There were many screams and cries, especially from mothers who were seeking their children,—many supplications for deliverance, many prayers for forgiveness of sins, many commendations of souls to God. Those who were able, made their way to the door of the saloon and up the staircase to the sloping deck. But the rising of the waters soon closed that means of retreat. From the cabins on the port-side, which was under water, the passengers were rescued by those who were on the starboard side, which was high and nearly dry; but the slope of the deck made it difficult to maintain a footing. Planting our heels against anything that offered resistance, and holding on by whatever we could seize as a means of support, we watched the waters rising, rising, rising—extinguishing the lights as they rose, till we were left in utter darkness, waiting the moment when we should be overwhelmed, or, wholly exhausted, drop into the engulfing waves. We heard noise and tumult above. Once voices reached us, "Any ladies below?" We answered as loudly and as frequently as we were able—"Ladies, children, men!" but there was silence and no relief. Our little group consisted of six persons—three males, three females. We discussed our chances of redemption, and abandoned hope. We held each other's hands, and the words,

cautiously into the thick coppice just as three men burst out. These had headed their comrades considerably; the rest were following at various distances. Gerard crawled back almost on all-fours. Instinct taught Martin and Margaret to do the same upon their line of retreat. Thus, within the distance of a few yards, the pursuers and pursued were passing one another upon opposite tracks.

A loud cry announced the discovery of the dead and the wounded hound. Then followed a babble of voices, still swelling as fresh pursuers reached the spot. The hunters, as usual on a surprise, were wasting time, and the hunted ones were making the most of it.

"I hear no more hounds," whispered Martin to Margaret, and he was himself again.

It was Margaret's turn to tremble and despair. "Oh! why did we part with Gerard? They will kill my Gerard, and I not near him!"

"Nay, nay! the head to catch him is not on their shoulders. You bade him meet us at the ash-tree."

"And so I did! Bless you, Martin, for thinking of that—to the ash-tree!"

"Ay! but with less noise."

They were now nearly at the edge of the coppice, when suddenly they heard hooping and hallooing behind them. The men had satisfied themselves the fugitives were in the coppice, and were beating back.

"No matter," whispered Martin to his trembling companion. "We shall have time to win clear and slip out of sight by hard running. Ah!"

He stopped suddenly; for just as he was going to burst out of the brush-wood, his eye caught a figure keeping sentinel. It was Ghysbrecht van Swieten seated on his mule, a bloody bandage was across his nose, the bridge of which was broken; but over this his eyes peered keenly, and it was plain by their expression he had heard the fugitives rustle, and was looking out for them. Martin muttered a terrible oath, and cautiously strung his bow, then with equal caution fitted his last arrow to the string. Margaret put her hands to her face, but said nothing. She saw this man must die or Gerard. After the first impulse she peered through her fingers, her heart panting audibly.

(To be continued.)

HEROD IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

WHEN the experiment of an Infant-School was determined on, in the last generation, the difficulty was how to begin.

Mr. Wilderspin long afterwards told the story of the first day of the first school, except that which had grown up under Mr. Owen, at Lanark. Mr. Wilderspin and his wife had been very unwilling to make such a venture as bringing together a great number of infants, who had never before spent an hour away from their homes or their mothers; but they were at last persuaded. How many arrived we do not remember; but they kept coming and coming; and the mothers took off their hats and bonnets, and kissed them, and left them. The Wilderspains set to work to play with them: and

heavy work it was. At last one little creature began to cry aloud. This set another off; the roar spread till every one of the whole assemblage was screaming at the top of its voice. There was nothing to be done—the noise was so great, and the distress so desperate. If this went on till noon—when the mothers were to come—half the children would be exhausted, and almost dead. In despair, the Wilderspains rushed into the next room, and the poor woman threw herself on the bed in tears. Her husband was struck by an unaccountable but most fortunate fancy. A cap of his wife's was hanging up to dry. He stuck it on the top of a pole, and carried it into the school, waving it as he went. Within two minutes every child had stopped crying. Their faces were all wet and blubbered, but they were watching the dancing cap.

We need not pursue the story. The hint of appealing to the eye was taken. The excellent master and mistress thought the morning never would be over; and the afternoon was little better. At night they agreed that they could not possibly go on with it; but, as future generations will know, they did persevere; and their success induced many to take up their work.

Many of our readers may have visited an Infant-School. Some may have visited several. Let them now recall what they saw. They saw, perhaps sixty children in one school; a hundred in another; two hundred in a third; all under five or six years old. Every one of these little creatures was infinitely dear to its parents, who thought that no other baby ever was so winning, so singularly charming; and even to a stranger who watched their movements, there was not one which did not excite interest in its own way. Most of them were alive in every fibre, never still a minute, except the set that were in the cribs; and they were in a rosy sleep, as still as at midnight. Now fancy all these schools united in one: add to them all the collection assembled at the baby-shows we heard of five years since; add to these again all the infants you ever remember to have seen; and then imagine these thousands of infants struck dead, lying—a crowd of corpses—on some wide common (for St. Paul's Cathedral floor would not hold them); conceive of them laid out in rows on the grass, with their little coffins piled in pyramids behind them; and you see but a small part of the murder of the innocents which goes on in England every year. Did you ever think of this before?

The fact is proved that, in England, a hundred thousand persons die needlessly every year; and of this number forty thousand are children under five years of age.

Of all the infants born in England, above forty per cent. die before they are five years old. Yet what creature is so tenacious of life as a baby? Those who know the creature best, say they never despair of an infant's life while it breathes: and most of us have witnessed some recoveries which are called miraculous. There is also no creature so easily manageable as an infant, so easily kept healthy and happy, merely by not interfering with the natural course of things. How, then, can this prodigious amount of killing go on

in a country where infanticide is not an institution?

It is precisely because the natural course of things is interfered with that infants die as they do. Nature provides their first food; and if they do not get it, whose fault is it? The great majority of mothers must be naturally able to nurse their own infants. Poor women do it as a matter of course; and if gentlewomen did it as simply and naturally, that one change would largely modify the average of deaths. Gentlewomen may not be aware of this, because the doctor is complaisant in bringing a wet-nurse, and the indolent mother is unaware that her own infant probably suffers, though it does not die, from being put to the wrong breast, while it never enters her head that the nurse's baby probably dies.

If, of the forty per cent. of English infants who die yearly we could know how many are the children of wet-nurses, the fact might startle the fine ladies who suborn the mothers, and might bring no small amount of reproach on the complaisant doctors. When the kind of food is changed, nature is still far from being deferred to as she ought.

Railways are doing good in the article of children's diet. There are still far too many town-cows; but more and more milk is brought in from the country. We remember the spectacle of the brewery cow, shut up all the week in her stable, where, from the effect of full feeding with grains, she soon could not turn round, nor get out till she was shrunk; and of her Sundays when, the gates being closed, she was let out to disport herself among the barrels in the yard. She was a picture of health in comparison with many London cows, which feed hundreds of children. This may, or may not, be better than the state of things when there was no milk to be had for nearly half the children in London; but the race will have no fair chance till there is an abundance of country milk procurable in every town in England.

Modern bread is a great improvement, generally speaking, on that of half a century ago; there are more vegetables, we believe, in proportion to our numbers; not so much meat, we fear, but what there is of a finer quality. In regard to food, the most fatal mischief is, perhaps, the bad cookery,—taking all ranks of society into the account. In many a respectable kitchen, and almost universally in the poor man's dwelling, a large proportion of the nourishing quality of food is lost by injudicious cookery. Other mischiefs in regard to aliment we see every day. We see hungry children, with their spectre eyes and pinched features, and the tell-tale down, like that of a callow bird, on their cheeks. We see infants gnawing at raw apples or carrots, to keep them quiet. We see the children of small shopkeepers, and artisans, and farmers killed with a surfeit of food. We specify those classes, because they, above others, fall into the mistake of cramming themselves and their children, under the notion of living comfortably, doing justice to the children, and so on. The doctors could tell a good deal about the amount of disease in people of all ages,

where it is the habit of the household to eat every two or three hours, and have meat or fish at every meal. Liver complaints and fevers afflict, or carry off, the parents in many such households; and child after child dies of diarrhoea, inflammatory attacks, or actual surfeit. If the food eaten could be divided between the hungry and the over-fed, a noble group of English children would grow up, year by year, to serve and grace society, and enjoy their natural term of life, instead of being missed from the crib, and the little chair at table, and the father's knee in the evening, and the mother's heart through the whole weary day.

So much for interference with nature about food. As to medicine, that may be called an interference with nature in every case; though the consequences of a yet worse disobedience may render physicking the lesser of two evils, on occasion.

We need say nothing here of the practice of giving laudanum or other narcotics to infants, because anything that can be said has been said, aloud, solemnly, vehemently, from one end of society to the other. Where we still see an infant laid down with a flannel steeped in "cordial" stuffed into its mouth; or the bottle and spoon with baby's "sleeping mixture" on the mantelpiece, it is either where an old nurse is about to give over her office to a new generation, or where the household is sunk so low in intemperance and ignorance, that nothing can be done but through education, from the lowest point upwards. But there are still nurseries, from the tradesman's attic to the nobleman's suite of children's apartments, where quacking practices are going on, as fatal as the sleeping sop in the cellar or the gin-shop. We, ourselves, have seen ladies in silk and lace, diligently engaged in killing a baby—following their own notions—(the mother obedient to the grandmother), rubbing in calomel in large quantities, after putting some down the throat. We will not say what more we have seen, for one case is as good as ten, for purposes of warning. Some of the wisest persons we know, of both sexes, parents, doctors, nurses, and sensible observers, are of opinion that children will never grow up in full vigour and full numbers while more or less drugged. Remedies should rarely be needed; and of all remedial measures, swallowing drugs (or receiving them in any way) will hereafter be the last to be resorted to.

Brain diseases seem to be the scourge of infancy in our time: far more so than of old, when fevers and digestive disturbance seem to have prevailed. The fact is, we are all less vegetative in our habits than our forefathers were; and, whatever may be the effect on our adult bodies and minds, we ought to consider the case of the children more than we do. The racket, and wear and tear, that the human brain is subject to, in our days, before it is fully grown, may account for a large proportion of the needless mortality which is our crime and disgrace.

We all join in a shout of reprobation when we hear of the frightening of infants in the dark. We execrate the housemaid who hid herself in mamma's bed-curtains; and, just when the little child was nearly asleep, came and pinched its nose, with the hoarse information, "I'm Billy the Bo:" but yet

there are papas—great men at the bar, perhaps, or busy men at the bank—who come home after baby is gone to bed and just asleep, and who must give baby a toes before dinner. They go and snatch up baby from its first sleep, and before it knows what it is about, toes it half-way to the ceiling; or, in winter, shake it about before the flaring gas-light. We would not venture to say which is worst, Billy the Bo, or such fathers, as far as the children's brains are concerned. Then, there are the frequent journeys of our days. Formerly, young children of all ranks had the advantage, which the children of the humbler middle classes have now—of vegetating, while their nature is vegetative; of living on from month to month, and from year to year, with only such change as deepened the benefit of the stillness; sleeping in the same bed, going through the same daily routine, and being thereby more at liberty to profit by the natural changes of the seasons and of human life. The brain then grew undisturbed, the natural processes of thought went on, the powers were developed in their order, and every stage of life was fruitful in its turn. It is so now where children are reared under the guardianship of thorough good-sense.

But the exceptions to this normal rearing seem to be more numerous—perhaps during a transition state only. Among the richer classes, infants really seem to have no rest. They are whiaked hither and thither by railway, without any apparent consideration of the effects of its singular accompaniments of noise and motion. There are not a few adults who feel it a hardship to have no choice of modes of travelling, if they are not rich enough to protest. The double motion of the railway carriage, the noise and swiftness, are sorely trying to many heads, stomachs, and spines: yet we see in almost every train more or fewer infants, of whom some are probably receiving fatal injury. At the age when quietness is so necessary that we can detect the bad effects of the silly practice of talking loud to infants (as to foreigners, as if they were deaf, because they cannot understand as we do), we expose the tender brain to the barbarous rumble, whizz, clatter, and screech of a railway-train. At the period when nature shuts in the little creature within the quiet enclosure of home, where it can take refuge from scaring sights and sounds in its mother's lap, we see it carried over land and sea, meeting new faces and new scenes at every turn, and going through everything but the regular habits necessary to its growth,—to the confirmation of each stage of development.

The roving life of our day is abundantly hurtful at a subsequent stage of education; but it then affects the mental and moral growth, whereas in infancy the physical frame is liable to fatal mischief from it. The youth and the girl who have travelled every year of their lives, and been carried over continent and sea in pursuit of "advantages," may, and usually do, turn out incapable of deep thought or feeling,—essentially superficial, though apparently liberal; but the little one of the family is of weak intellect, or dwarfed, or rickety, or is probably in its grave. The poorer classes suffer proportionally by Infant Schools, if we may judge by the statistics which

show the mortality from brain-disease among the infant-school population of the country. The process is much the same in the two cases. Nature is outraged in both. It may be better that the working-woman's child should be at school at three years old than setting itself on fire, or falling out of the window, or being run over in the street; but it is out of its proper place in a large room, amidst a vast assemblage of children of its own age, all making a noise, and every sense being excited for the greater part of every day. Its natural place is in a home where no two people are of the same age; where there is a certain household resemblance among them all; where all are too busy for much noise; and where there are quiet times and shady places for the repose of the sensitive little brain when it grows irritable.

It does not follow that the child itself should be quiet, except just enough for its own good. It makes one's heart ache to read of the little Brontës stepping about the house as if they trod on eggs, and speaking in whispers, and knowing no games, nor the delight of a shout. The best rebuke ever given to thoughtlessness about a child's need of lung-exercise was perhaps that given by poor Laura Bridgman, the American girl so pathetically and philosophically made known to Europe by the annual reports of her guardian, Dr. Howe. This poor child, actually bereaved of eyes and ears in early infancy, showed all the instincts of childhood as she grew up, and, among the rest, that of making a noise: but being totally deaf, her noises were harsh and troublesome. When instructed about suppressing them, the poor dumb girl asked, by her finger-signs, "Why, then, has God given me so much voice?" This was guidance. She was allowed a room for a certain time daily, where she might make all the noise she pleased. Every young child ought to have that sort of liberty for a considerable part of every day. When it begins to chatter, its lungs will have plentiful exercise: meantime its natural cries of joy and grief should have free course, except during the hours when it may be trained to be quiet. We may be disposed to pity the Quaker child in many Friends' households, set up on a high stool for a certain time daily, to learn to be perfectly still; but it is a question whether the little creature does not gain, on the whole, by the practice, if it is only left free to make itself heard all over the garden in play-hours: but the noise ought to be in proportion to the self-denial which earns it.

Not only must the lungs be exercised, if the child is to be healthy, but the senses must be put early to use, to develop the brain equally. We remember two ladies of about the same age, and in much the same position, and, moreover, acquainted with each other, who offered the most complete contrast in their way of entertaining their succession of babies; a contrast which would have been ludicrous, but for the thought of the consequences. One was a peremptory, self-confident woman, whose spirit was never dashed with a misgiving in her life, most probably. Every place where she was seemed full of glare, noise, and bustle; and her notion of baby-play, in which

she thought herself unparalleled, was praising baby in the most highfown terms, in a scream like an eagle's, shaking it like a pitch of hay on a fork, and making it the most stupendous promises in the most alarming manner. What the maturity of those babies is, we will not describe. The contrasting mother was singularly absent. She would let her baby sit doubled up on her left arm (always the same arm) for any length of time that her reverie lasted. While her large, vacant black eyes were fixed on the window-blind, and her mouth hung half-open, baby's large black eyes fixed on vacancy, and hanging jaw, presented the most absurd likeness to its mother throughout a long series. When not so niched on the arm, the child was on the carpet,—put down like a bag of meal,—and supplied with a bunch of keys, which it jingled till somebody came to take it up again. Dull as ditch-water, dry as chaff, were the minds so left undeveloped; and the bodily state was something between health and disease. It is only through the sweet and merry entertainment of exercising the eyes on colours, forms, and objects, and the ears among natural sounds, and the touch on all substances that come in the way, that the highest health can be attained,—the elastic, inexhaustible energy which grows out of an active and well-amused mind, during its period of abode among the senses.

These things are overlooked by many who are aware of the necessity of exercising the limbs; but how great is the number of mothers and nursemaids who do not perceive even the latter necessity, the prevalence of perambulators may indicate. We hope these vehicles have been sufficiently abused. Deaths of infants by sun-stroke in the Park this summer, are a pretty strong warning; and attention has been directed by all conceivable means to the blue lips, rolling eyes, and dead countenances of infants wheeled through the wind and frost in mid-winter,—their bodies torpid, their limbs cramped, their sensations those of dull misery; so that we may hope that the pile of coffins for victims of a practice liable to so much abuse may not be destined to grow much larger.

What in the world is easier than to let nature show what the child ought to do with its limbs? Give the little creature space and liberty, and encouragement to tumble about, and see what it will do. A soft ball, cunningly rolled, is enough to set an infant using all its powers till it is tired, when it will be still. It will get up when it is able to stand: it will pass from one chair to another when it is able to walk; and nothing but mischief can come of interfering,—mischief in the form of bow-legs or crooked ankles, and infinite distress to the child.

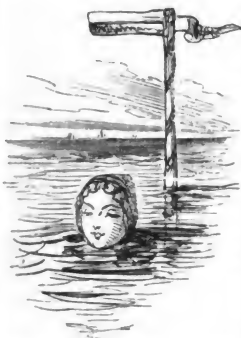
And thus it is through the whole course of infant life. The machine will go very well if its works are not tampered with or obstructed. In the child's first walks across the room, we let it take its own path, only watching to remove obstructions, and to prevent a fall: and just such should be the course of the little creature's progress in life. It will do all that it ought to do at the right time, if it is only left untainted in the requisites of health—good air, wholesome food,

warmth and cleanliness, and tender intercourse. Sensible women say there is nothing easier than managing children, body and mind, if good sense is brought to the task. You may wind them round your finger; you may make anything of them, in regard to moral habits, simply by letting nature have her perfect work, free from perversion by anxiety, carelessness, or passion. Sensible doctors say the same as to the bodily growth, supposing the child is born healthy. The natural course of things is, that every infant born free from disease and imperfection, should at five years old be a creature full of promise—erect, intelligent, active, inquisitive, manifesting in little all the qualities which contribute to compose a true manhood or womanhood. Instead of this, what do we see? The most distressing after-dinner incident we ever witnessed was this: A man of literary eminence—a family man, a man of the tenderest heart and most delicate feelings—was dining with some old acquaintance after a long term of foreign travel. Two other guests were present. After dinner, the door opened, and a weakly, tottering, dismal-looking little girl of three entered silently, and was silently taken upon mamma's lap. The returned traveller studied her for a moment, and then said, "Come, you are all very well; but where are the rest?" The rest, six others, were all in their graves!

So, if we would summon the family of English infants by the hundred born on the same day, what should we see? Perhaps twenty would appear in perfect bloom, true towards nature, and dressed in her strength and beauty. Forty more might follow, whose parents are looking forward to the proper threescore years and ten for them. Some few, perhaps, may be mournfully regarded as destined for a short career; but no thoughtless observer would guess the smallness of the chance that most of the group have of completing the course of human life. Many will die soon, and few late. Unaware of the hidden signs or sources of disease, and satisfied with a low average of health, the spectator may say, "This is all very well; but where are the rest?" The rest are gone, and will be no more seen. Those forty out of the hundred have undergone, in the mass, a hell of suffering. Those tender little creatures, so sensitive to pain, yet so tenacious of life, have passed through the fire to Moloch. Their moans and shrieks, as the fire of disease consumed them, will never die out of our ears. "Oh! it is hard to see a child die!" exclaimed a fond father, who saw his two infants die in one week. It is hard, when all has been done that lies in the power of man or woman, first to guard and then to save. But of these forty in the hundred, there are scarcely any which are not cases of murder—of such murder as occasionally shocks society as having happened in a lunatic asylum. One does not blame anybody; but it is a dreadful catastrophe, which must be taken as a warning to permit no more. So it is with this great company of children, killed by misadventure. The great point is, that the perpetration is henceforth to be considered as either crime or lunacy. How long shall it be witnessed without resistance?

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

CLOVER.



HERE is no animal more to be envied, in my eyes, than a horse at grass,—not one of your broken-down screws, blistered all round, and left to batten on a moor; but an elderly lady's middle-aged carriage-horse, turned out with his match for company, up to

his hocks in clover, bobbing his head and shaking his mane to drive the flies from his nose, and switching his long tail to drive them from his flank. Would that I were a horse for this one occasion! I do like standing still so much, up to my hocks in clover. Nature never meant me for an Englishman; for though there is plenty of clover in England, yet somehow or other I never stand still to eat it. A crowd there is always pushing me along, just as I get my head down, and that is not what a horse likes this hot weather.

Where will they let me stand up to my hocks in clover? Not in France. Frenchmen are so vainglorious, and talk so much and so fast about war, and the women are so plain, and talk so much and so fast about dress; and there is not a quiet clover-field in all France, except Philippe's, in the Rue Mont Orgueil, and there clover is dreadfully expensive, and at the most can only last two hours; whereas I like clover all night for nothing, and to be taken in when the flies come out. Do you like yawning? I do. I delight in it, this hot weather.

Will they let me stand still on the Rhine? Certainly not.

In Germany? No!

Is there a country where nothing moves?

Is there any clover or trefoil in Belgium? Will they let me stand still in it? Will the man in office expect a passport? or will he be satisfied with the back of a letter addressed to me, William à Bon Marché, Esquire, alias Cheap William, as they called me at school?

I will try. I am at Ostend. No difficulties. My face is ingenuous: there is nothing of Will Watch in my look.

"Rien à déclarer?"

"Rien, M'sieu." I pass. "No passport?"

"No passport." I show my envelope. I pass. Too-too, on a trumpet; the train starts, and I am at Bruges.

François is wrong; François, the Commissionnaire of the Hôtel Fleur de Blé, is in a mistake. There is a high tower to the Halle, a tower of many steps,

at the top of which are many bells, which produce many chimes of no tune, and out of time. François thinks that I will mount that tower of 400 steps with him, that I will buy his vile cigars, and admire all the crucifixions and ghastly martyrdoms in every church of Bruges.

Thank you much, François; but that is not my idea of clover.

He does not understand the expression, and continues: "Shall you see the house where your Keeng Charless levee when at Bruges?" Not the least like clover. "Shall you like to see the mark of the last high tide on the Halle?" and he holds up his hand above his head. Does he mean the last occasion on which the dykes gave way? or the last spring-tide "as ever was?"

"Hi! you, cabby! take me out of Bruges!"

But it is late—the last train is gone. The seven gates of Bruges are closed: the keys of those gates are silver keys, and I am a pauper. So Bruges sleeps in its quiet streets, and I sleep at the Fleur de Blé, which is a pretty name for a public-house, not to be turned into English, and still to carry the sentiment, Flower of wheat is too near wheaten flour, which brings with it millers and Mark Lane.

Blossom of wheat? No.

Corn blossom? Not the least like it.

Were you ever at Bruges? An old-fashioned town—half Flemish, a quarter young Belgium (not at all a nice young man), and the rest French and Spanish. Bruges can never grow bigger, for it has a broad sedgy canal all round, and over the canal are seven bridges, and at each bridge there is a gate which is closed every night, and something is charged for coming home after hours; no latch-keys allowed. So Bruges can only grow less inside the canal; and Bruges at present is availing itself of its only opportunity. The clover of Bruges is a poor pasture; but Bruges does not even stand still in it. Grazing terms fail me in describing Bruges, and recourse must be had to a nautical figure. Bruges is sinking at its moorings.

Nobody moves here. It is hot and sedgy, and bad for wheezy people, for we are many feet below the level of the sea; and there is that dreadful mark of the high-tide on the Halle (high up in the wall too), the thought of which gives me a swim-you-must feeling some day or other. But the natives are reconciled, and it does not look well to have misgivings where all are confiding.

Yet there is one little patch of clover in Bruges. In the year fourteen hundred and odd, a soldier was wounded at the battle of Nancy, and was removed from the field to the hospital of St. John at Bruges, where he was kept by the monks for eleven years for nothing. No, not for nothing, for there was money's-worth in the poor wounded soldier.

His name was Emling, or Hemling, or Memling (for spelling was as lax in those days as it was in the generation just past, in which the Duke of Wellington spelled his name Wesley early in life, being a relative to the Christian of that name, and Wellesley when he grew older), and there is not a more remarkable name in the whole range of the history of painting than that of Emling.

The collateral state of the arts in different countries at different periods is very curious. Whilst artists in England were daubing in the style of the ancient Mexicans, in Flanders, only a few hours' sail distant, a man like Embling not only knew the science of correct drawing and all the tricks of his art, but also had a knowledge of chemistry sufficient to enable him to prepare colours that have lasted 400 years, and are still as bright as the day they were laid on.

So the monks of St. John maintained Embling in hospital, while he was painting pictures for them—pictures which may be said to be priceless, for an English duke offered ten thousand pounds for one of them, and the offer was refused. In the Adoration of the Magi there is the figure of a negro in a green tunic embroidered with gold, tights and frill of Embling's time, taking off his hat and feathers in the most courteous manner, to the little stranger, which negro, for pose drawing, colouring, and wonderful skill in expressing embroidery, velvet, negro's skin, feathers and leather, could scarcely even be copied at the present day.

There is a shrine, or *chasse*, as it is called, covered with paintings, by Embling, representing the adventures of St. Ursula from Cologne to Rome, her reception by the Pope, her return, and the martyrdom of herself and companions in the camp of Maximian—all clover. Her figure in the last scene of all, just as a soldier in full knight's armour is drawing a bow to the arrow head close to her breast, is quite beautiful.

Some may smile at the Joseph in the Adoration being dressed as a Flemish gentleman of Embling's day, and at the negro as a page of the same period. But these are mistakes made by artists in all ages. Embling painted what he saw, which gave him an advantage over the artists nearer our own time, who usually exhibit Solomon as a Roman senator. Did not Garrick do Macbeth in knee-breeches, silk-stockings and full bottomed wig? Is there not his picture to this effect in the Garrick Club?

When you come to Bruges, mind you spend the days of your sojourn with Embling and the man in the wig who shows the gallery. He in the wig talks as if he loved his avocations, and is well worth a franc for himself, given before-hand.

And when you have done with Embling, have done with Bruges. One Dutch gable-end is like another. The canal is equally sedgey all round, and the grass grows the same length in all its deserted alleys.

"Hi! you cabby! drive me to the station to meet any train that leaves Bruges for anywhere."

"The voiture is engaged, or would be at the service of Monsieur——"

"When does that diligence start that has Blankenberghe in big letters on its panels? Where is Blankenberghe?"

A man in blouse says, Blankenberghe is on the sea; an hour and a little quarter's drive, and the diligence starts in twenty minutes. So do I. We are nearly full, and I sit among a family of two old ladies and one young one. We arrange legs, and I hold on my knee a pappy-dog for one of the old ladies, and a bird-cage for the young one, who

has blue eyes and long black hair, and reminds me of you, O Laura! and I have a day-dream till we come to a series of half-way houses, where we all drink cheap Belgian beer, and I get a centime in exchange—supposed to be the first ever given to an Englishman. Then we see the dunes or sand-hills, which are the only barrier between the brave Belgians and an eternity of salt-water. Then comes Blankenberghe, on the land-side of the dunes, to the top of which I mount by thirty steps, and then descend ten to the beach, which proves, without doubt or the use of the dumpy, that I am living below the level of the sea. And I am again by the sea, where I never had a lonely hour, and on a sandy beach where clover always grows for me.

There are crowds of people under the awning of the restaurant built on the dune, and on the beach below there are donkeys, and nearer the sea are the bathing-machines which are moved as the tide rises and falls, and are always kept about forty yards from the sea. And between the sea and the machines men and women of all ages and classes are walking and talking in their bathing dresses. The ladies in dark peg-top trousers and tunics trimmed with red or orange, and their hair loose or in bags, and their white little feet bare on the yellow sands; and the men of the machines are bathing them, and dipping and teaching them to swim by holding them gently, ever so gently, just above the waves. I think I could do that, and I bathe and long to give lessons to the demoiselle, her of the birdcage, with blue eyes and long loose black hair; but I am shy, and on my road back to the machine I meet and have a long talk with the two old ladies who are watching the demoiselle, and I dress and mount the ten steps to the restaurant where everybody is dining, and I dine, for I never in the whole course of my life could look on long at any game.

"What would I like? Ostend oysters came into season last week, and the *moules* are delicious."

"Mussels!" said I. "Do you call mussels human food? Do you take me for a gurnet or a rock cod, that you should bait for me with a mussel that has lived all its life on a pier or a ship's bottom, coppered or otherwise?"

"Monsieur is in a mistake. The mussels of Blankenberghe are a great delicacy; they are caught on a bank; they are kept in clear water for two days to clean; then in scalding water till they open; then a sauce of butter, parsley and other fragrant herbs is poured over them, shells and all, and they are picked out nominally with a fork, but really with a finger and thumb, and eaten with brown bread and butter and Faro beer—clover, clover!"

The demoiselle that I longed to bathe is at the next table, picking them out with a jerk much faster than I can manage.

"Will Mademoiselle teach me how?"

"Volontiers," and I order another buahl.

"In return I shall be happy to teach Mademoiselle to swim."

"A thousand thanks—at nine to-morrow."

"To-morrow at nine."

Clover, clover, clover!

C.

UNCLE SIMKINSON AND MRS. MOUNTELEPHANT.



If you look into any newly-established chemist's shop in a country town, at any hour, you will probably see some neatly dressed young female waiting to be served. Early and late, winter and summer, spring-time and autumn, the same phenomenon presents itself. We have observed it on so many occasions, that we long since began to theorise upon it, and we fancy with some success. Is the feminine tooth in perpetual suffering? for chemists are dentists as well as druggists. Are delicate little fingers continually being pinched in malignant wickets? Do chilblains need medical advice; or is honey required for chaps when the thermometer is at 93 degrees in the shade? We have no hesitation in giving these questions a most unflinching negative.

How, then, do we account for the shops of young chemists being the chosen resort of the gentle sex? Simply in this way: because the young chemist is looking out for a partnership—not chemical—but connubial—and every pretty and sensible young person—maid or widow—knows it, and turns that knowledge to profitable account.

That is our theory.

In a year or two a change takes place. Instead of a lady being constantly before the counter, one is occasionally seen behind it. The most meritorious candidate has been selected for preferment. With proper feeling the opposition retire, and business is allowed to flow in its natural and legitimate channels. The sale of cosmetics is greatly reduced, depilatories are

are in less request, and casualties, such as the pricking of thumbs, or burns from Italian-irons, are of very rare occurrence.

The young chemist is no longer a marked man—his individuality has fallen like a drop of rain, and been swallowed up in the mighty ocean of matrimony.

Such are the vicissitudes to which chemistry and its professors are exposed, and which were experienced in their full force by Josiah Simkinson on his setting up for himself, to use a homely and intelligible phrase. Josiah had been only a few months out of his apprenticeship, when aided by his uncle Simkinson's capital, he opened a smart little chemist's shop, amply adorned with red and blue bottles, not a hundred miles, or anything like it, from the market-town of G—, in the pleasant county of Surrey. The usual course of things followed. Though a remarkably sedate young man, Josiah was by no means ill-favoured—his eyes being blue, and his whiskers luxuriant though sandy. For advice, therefore, all the fair and unappropriated inhabitants of G— resorted to the Golden Horn, where Mr. Simkinson supplied it gratis, but without that display of sympathy which many young pharmacopolists would have deemed it politic and kind to exhibit to patients who so much desired and perhaps deserved it. The fact is, that Josiah was not adapted for his profession; he had no command of small talk; he was grossly ignorant of the soothing system; had quite forgotten, if he had ever learnt, that in prescribing for the "nerves," a little flattery is sometimes as serviceable as a little ether, or sal-volatile. He was a stoic, not of the woods, but of the gallipots, with some modesty, an upright and gentlemanly figure, a very white hand, and a very white apron.

In addition, however, to his natural cynicism, he

had another motive power which prompted him to treat the artifices of speculating spinsters with profound indifference. He was engaged to Sophy Pinnett, a very little but astonishingly pretty milliner, who, having lost her father, a master mariner, at an early age, had supported herself and mother for many years, partly by her industry and skill.

One evening, shortly after Josiah had lit his gas, and was busy spreading a diachylon plaster with a hot spatula, the postman placed a letter on his counter, which he opened with evident alarm. It was from Uncle Simkinson, and ran as follows:—

MY DEAR JOSIAH,—I dare say you will be rather surprised to hear it, but I am going to enter into the happy state of wedlock, with a very nice middle-aged widow lady, Mrs. Mountelephant, whom you may remember we met at Waterloo last summer, and whose two daughters—very tall and commanding in appearance, like their mamma—you will find highly intellectual, speaking German with great fluency. If you have any idea of changing your condition, and becoming a benedict, you couldn't do better than at once make your election: my vote and interest you may rely upon. Please send me a bottle of eau-de-Cologne, and a large piece of sponge, free from grit, and believe me,

Your affectionate uncle,

NEHEMIAH SIMKINSON.

The perusal of this letter quite unmanned the chemist, and, laying down his spatula with a heavy heart, he remained for some minutes buried in solemn meditation.

He was restored to consciousness by the entrance of a brisk, fresh-looking, but corpulent old gentleman in spectacles, with a white hat, blue coat, and bright buttons.

"Well, Josiah," said the old gentleman, putting his gold-headed cane under his arm, and rubbing his hands cheerfully, "how goes business, eh?"

Josiah shook his head and sighed.

"What! won't people be bled, bolused, and blistered?" exclaimed the old gentleman: "do they all cry with Shakspeare, 'throw physic to the dogs—we'll none on't'?"

"Well, Mr. Butterfield," replied Josiah, "business is not so bad, but—I suppose you've heard about my uncle?"

"No, I've not. What has happened?" inquired the friend of the family. "He hasn't had another visit from his old enemy?"

"I'm sorry to say, Mr. Butterfield, he has," returned Josiah, rolling out a mass of brown paste, prior to its division into pills.

"Ah, bad boy! he should try a dry old port," observed Mr. Butterfield: "he's too fond of a fruity flavour—won't do for gout."

"It's not gout, sir," rejoined the chemist, with a faint smile. "I wish it was, with all my heart."

"No! you don't mean it! What is it? A little palpitation here?" And the old gentleman, patting himself on the waistcoat, winked with great significance.

"That's it, sir," replied the chemist, taking his spatula and cutting the roll of brown paste into a species of mince physic.

"Dear me," said Mr. Butterfield, looking at Josiah complacently through his spectacles. "I'm very glad indeed to hear of it."

Josiah dropped his spatula with an air of astonishment:

"Mr. Butterfield!"

"You know, Josiah," remarked the old gentleman, "it's never too late to repent: he ought to have done it twenty years ago, and so I've told him over and over again. Why, look at me. I married at eighteen, and now I'm the father of ten and the grandfather of as many more. What think you of that?"

"Well, I think, Mr. Butterfield," said Josiah, gravely, "that you made a wise and happy selection. My uncle, I fear, is the victim of infatuation."

"How so?" demanded the friend of the family.

In answer to this inquiry, Josiah informed Mr. Butterfield that the lady to whom his uncle was engaged—a Mrs. Mountelephant—was the widow of a superintendent of the Irish constabulary; that she was a magnificent woman, with a high, commanding tone; and that he felt assured her imperious manners, not to mention her two daughters, who were reduced copies of their mamma, would render poor Uncle Simkinson miserable for life.

"A perfect Boadicea," observed Mr. Butterfield, who appeared to be slightly impressed by Josiah's earnestness. "I was in hopes he had found some nice little woman who would butter his crumpets, air his slippers, sweeten his gruel, tie his cravat, and lighten his sorrows. Supposing you and I call upon him to-morrow evening, and see if we can't restore him to reason?"

Josiah consented with pleasure, and Mr. Butterfield having requested his medical adviser to let

him have a packet of James's powders, took his departure, first promising to see Uncle Sim, and prepare his mind for the operation, of which it stood so urgently in need.

The hearty old gentleman was scarcely out of sight, when his place was taken by a little, but remarkably pretty young female, with very bright hazel eyes, very glossy brown curls, and the smallest chip bonnet, trimmed with flowers, that the perverse ingenuity of fashion has perhaps ever produced.

"Isn't that delicious?" she said, holding up a *bouquet* to Josiah's roman nose.

"Tolerable," replied the chemist, coldly moulding his bite of paste into spherical forms between his finger and thumb.

"There's no encouragement to give you anything nice," returned the little beauty. "I thought you would have been enraptured. Some young-people—would."

Josiah dropped the finished pill into a white card-box, and heaved a great sigh.

"How dull you look to-day," complained the fairy-temper, with something between sympathy and reproach. "What's happened, Josey, dear?"

"I've had a letter from Uncle Simkinson," replied the chemist, shutting the pill-box, with an expression of sorrow; "but walk into the surgery, and I'll tell you all about it, as soon as I've made up Mrs. Condito's prescription."

Sophy went into the surgery, and sat down in an awful looking chair, with a high and hollow back, adapted for patients who were doomed to undergo the fearful penalties of dental extraction. There was a kind of corkscrew on the mantelshelf, and other instruments of torture, which Sophy could not contemplate without a shudder.

"I have just received this letter from my uncle," said Josiah, handing Sophy the depressing epistle before cited.

"So, he's going to be married at last," cried Sophy laughing. "Well, they say, better late than never."

"My dear Sophy," remonstrated the chemist, "how can you treat a serious matter with such shocking levity—really, I'm surprised."

"Why?"

"Why!"

"There's no harm in it, Josey," rejoined Sophia, with one of her sweetest looks.

"Well!" said the medical professor, untying and retying his white apron, "that's purely a matter of taste."

"O!" cried Sophia, rising and preparing to go, for like some other little, but pretty women, her humility was not greatly conspicuous at all times. "You wish to play at contradictions. I see no necessity for it. So—good evening."

Josiah turned and caught her just as she had opened the surgery door, and was about to depart in a tiff—a lover's tiff, of course. There was a little tear on her cheek, which ought to have been preserved in a lachrymatory, as it was the first and last that Josiah's cruelty ever caused her to shed.

"Don't be angry, Sophy," said the penitent chemist in a more sentimental tone than he had given him credit for. "I didn't mean to—"

"I know that, Josey," murmured Sophy, wiping her eyes and adjusting her side-combs; "but why are you so alarmed, dear, about Uncle Simkinson's marriage?"

"Because, Sophy, it will not only be the ruin of him, but I fear the ruin of both of us. You know he lent me two hundred pounds to take this business, for which he holds my promissory note. Now, I've no confidence in that Mrs. Mountelephant: she's a haughty and overbearing, if not also an artful and designing woman. She will rule poor Uncle Sim with a rod of iron, and will perhaps set him against all his relations, in order to secure his property for herself and her daughters."

"O Josiah," cried Sophy, looking tenderly upon her adorer, "I think you are too—what shall I say—cautious. I do, indeed."

"One can't be too cautious, Sophy," returned the chemist, drawing his stool nearer to Sophy's chair. "I was in hopes that we should have been able to have arranged for our marriage next month, but until I know what my uncle's feeling will be when he is married, it would be madness to think of it. Here's Mrs. Condito—excuse me."

And Josiah left the surgery, carefully closing the door behind him, to prevent Mrs. Condito from gratifying her native curiosity by seeing Josiah's "intended," of whom rumour spoke highly, and rumour in a country town, as we all know, is seldom or never unsupported by some slight foundation of fact.

Leaving Sophy and Josiah to confer more fully on this alarming state of affairs, let us endeavour to ascertain the feelings and position of the party most interested—if Josiah's statement be correct—in escaping from it.

Uncle Simkinson was a little bald-headed man, with a long reddish nose and grey twinkling eyes. He dressed with great primness, and always wore a large seal, a smart frill, drab smalls and gaiters to match.

Uncle Sim had his weak side—he was a little too fond of punch. Reclining in an easy chair, with a sleek tortoiseshell cat purring at his feet; his feet on the fender; a bright fire before him; a glass of hot whiskee-toddy and a couple of wax candles at his elbow, and Petrarch's Sonnets visible through his eye-glass, he would, under ordinary circumstances, have been happy, for what more could a rational bachelor require to make him supremely blest? Nothing.

But Uncle Sim had for some short time ceased to be a rational bachelor. He was under the spell of the Enchantress. On the plains of Waterloo, to which he and his nephew Josiah made a pilgrimage from Brussels last summer, Uncle Sim was encountered and conquered by Mrs. Mountelephant. He listened, and was lost—carried away by her commanding eloquence and military genius, as she expatiated, for the edification of her daughters—two stately young ladies of highly apprehensive aspect and voluminous crinoline—upon the magnitude and grandeur of European war. With her parasol as her indicator, she pointed out the locality of the most remarkable events in that great battle, whereon she spake with Johnsonian pomp and patriotic pride. Yonder was the farm-house of Hougoumont; there was the

orchard, where "Greek met Greek." By that road the Prussians advanced. On the right was La Belle Alliance, where Blucher and Wellington first embraced; and there, where mangel-wurzel now is nurtured by the enanguined soil, that fell and final struggle ensued, in obedience to the summons, "Up guards and at 'em," whose memory historians have rendered imperishable.



When a young man, Uncle Sim had been one of the Coggeshall Fencibles, and even now the embers of martial enthusiasm glowed in his bosom, and lent a heroic radiance to his eye. No wonder, therefore, that he gazed admiringly upon Mrs. Mountelephant, and eagerly sought to make her acquaintance. Moreover, though he had never invested his happiness in nuptial bonds, he had a fine appreciation of feminine majesty, and was wont to speak of Siddons, Pasta, and other Queens of Tragedy and Song, in terms of extravagant laudation. With the graceful gallantry of a past age, he rendered homage to the magnificent charms of the Irish widow, and was so successful, that a month had scarcely elapsed from their meeting at Waterloo, when the widow had taken possession not only of his heart, but of furnished apartments in his house.

One evening, shortly after Uncle Simkinson had written to inform his nephew of his contemplated union with Mrs. Mountelephant, he was sitting alone in bachelor meditation—fancy free—when, dreaming of wedded bliss, he nodded and fell asleep. He was awoke by a brisk current of air, which he ascribed to the sudden entrance of Mrs. Mountelephant and her voluminous daughters. Presenting him with a marriage licence, the widow announced that she had arranged everything for to-morrow at 11 a.m., military time, and hoped Mr. Simkinson would not keep the carriage waiting. Uncle Sim, whose mind was not accustomed

to travel by express trains of thought, declared afterwards, that he felt so completely subdued by Mrs. Mountelephant's imperial address, that he had neither power nor will to offer any resistance. The nuptials were accordingly solemnised forthwith; and on their return from church, Mrs. Simkinson addressed her consort—having first desired him to be seated—in these words:

"You may probably not be aware, Mr. Simkinson, that I am and have been for some years—indeed prior to my poor dear husband's decease—the 'Honorary Secretary to the Ladies' Managing Committee of the United General and Benevolent Association for the Promotion of Cottage Economy among the Industrial Peasantry in the Northern District of the Province of Connaught.' My official duties will require my presence in Ireland for a few weeks every year. I have, however, made such arrangements that you will not have to complain of any want of comfort during my absence. Martha will remain with you on board wages. I have given her directions about taking down the four-post bedstead, during which time perhaps you would not mind sleeping on the boards. The chandelier, mirror, paintings, piano, sofa, &c., will all be carefully wrapped in brown-holland, so that you need be under no apprehension of their sustaining any injury. The family plate I have sent to my daughter Adelaide, and the best china cups and saucers are carefully put away, so that nothing can be stolen or destroyed. The carpets will all be taken up and the floors scoured. With reference to refectations, you will find sixty-seven spoonfuls of tea in the caddy—two for each day and one over for the teapot. As Martha will be so much occupied, perhaps you will excuse her cooking more than is absolutely necessary. I have told her to get you a neck of mutton for Sunday-next, which will probably last you all the week. Should you wish for wine or spirits at any time, I will leave the key of the cellaret with my daughter Clarissa, and on your communicating with her at Bayswater, she will supply you with any quantity that you may require. There is half a bottle of cowslip wine and a little gingerette, but you will only take them medicinally of course. I have locked the book-case, but you will find on my official bureau, which is open, a few works, such as 'Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations,' 'McCulloch's Statistics,' 'Watts' Logic,' 'The Principles of Banking Popularly Explained,' and a large collection of Blue Books, by which your mind in solitude will be agreeably elevated and relieved. Martha has tied a kid glove round the knocker to prevent hearth-stone boys from coming up the steps, so that you can pursue your studies without interruption. You will oblige me by keeping the curtains drawn and blinds down, and let me beg of you not to indulge in your usual habit of humming any secular tunes, which might lead unthinking persons to associate my absence with feelings on your part other than those of deep and becoming regret."

"Have you finished?" demanded Uncle Sim.

"One word more. Should any friend call, as you will have no means of entertaining him, you will not be 'at home'—in the polite sense of the term."

"Madam!" exclaimed Uncle Sim, unable any longer to curb his rage, "do you wish to reduce me to a perfect nonentity? Are you aware that I am your lord and master? That my will is law, and that your province is simply to render obedience and honour?"

"Sir!" returned the late Mrs. Mountelephant, majestically, "I shall not condescend to answer such common-place remarks."

Uncle Sim collapsed to his natural proportions. "But am I to sacrifice all my little domestic bachelor comforts?" pleaded Uncle Sim, with tearful pathos.

"Assuredly!" rejoined his imperious consort; "have I not sacrificed my pension—my name—my independence? Ungrateful man! I leave you to your reflections."

And with a magnificent sweep of her train, she left him accordingly.

"This is a pretty reign of terror," soliloquised Uncle Sim, throwing open his coat to breathe more freely. "I'm looked upon by Mrs. S. as less than nobody. I'll not endure it! I'll have a deed of separate maintenance!"

And scarcely had he uttered the words, when Clarissa entered, and, with a reproachful gaze, denounced him as a "monster," while Adelaide, looking over her sister's shoulder, shudderingly pronounced him a "brute."

Paralysed by such fearful epithets, Uncle Sim was seized with vertigo; his head swam, his body reeled, and, unable to maintain his balance, either mental or physical, he fainted away.

When he recovered his senses he was standing at the street-door, benumbed with cold. It was a frosty moon-lit night, and the iron railings sparkled as if strewn with small diamonds. After knocking violently for some minutes, Martha looked out of her chamber-window, and informed him that it was past one o'clock, and missis had ordered her never to admit master if he wasn't home before eleven.

Uncle Sim broke into a cold perspiration. He now saw it all. Mrs. S. was determined to worry him to death, secure his property, and marry another victim—if another could be found.

With feelings of unfeigned contrition, Uncle Sim retired to a small coffee-shop, where he slept all day. On his return home he perceived lights in the drawing-room, and shadows on the muslin-curtains, which made his purse-strings quiver, feeling that shadows such as these must be attended with a loss of substance somewhere. A confectioner's man was standing at the door, who requested Uncle Sim to help him down with his tray—an indignity to which Uncle Sim peremptorily refused to submit.

"Why, arn't you the greengrocer wot's come to wait at table?" said the confectioner's man with an air of surprise.

"Greengrocer?" cried Uncle Sim. "No! I'm master of the house."

"Doubtful!" coolly replied the man of tarts; "there's only one master here, and that's a missus."

"I'll go for a policeman," said Uncle Sim, and he had proceeded some distance for that purpose, when, turning round, his steps and attention were

arrested by a fly, with a gaunt horse, which stopped at his family mansion; and from which alighted three ladies in blue satin, one slightly deformed, and a stout military-looking man wearing a waxed moustache.

Uncle Sim hastened back, but it was too late, the door was closed before he could reach it, and with a sense of desolation he sat down on his own steps and wept.

The arrival of hired musicians—a harp, fiddle, and violoncello—compelled him to rise. Availing himself of the opportunity he followed them in, and ascending the grand staircase, was about to enter the drawing-room, when he was stopped by the greengrocer in faded theatrical livery, who begged him, as a gentleman, to walk down, as Mrs. Simkinson had very “pertikler” company.

This was too much, Uncle Sim seized the innocent greengrocer by his scarlet collar, and compressing him into a corner, left him breathless; then, bounding forward, he presently confronted Mrs. Simkinson, who was presiding at the tea-urn, while Clarissa and Adelaide sat on the sofa, one on either side of the stout military-man, whom they were evidently besieging with compliments of large calibre. The ladies in blue satin were bending over Heath’s Book of Beauties, and three fashionable but faint-looking gentlemen with faultless back-hair were bending over them.

“Don’t move, ladies,” said Mrs. Simkinson, composedly pausing with sugar-tongs in hand; “this poor gentleman labours under an hallucination; he fancies that he is master of the house, but he is quite harmless.”

So saying she stamped once or twice heavily on the carpet, when two solemn-looking men with cotton pocket-handkerchiefs in their hands, made their appearance, and would kindly have persuaded Uncle Sim to allow himself to be led away. “Never!” exclaimed the noble champion of the rights of man, “it’s my house, it’s my wife, it’s my furniture; and before I’ll abdicate my throne I’ll throw my house, and all that is in it, out of window!”

A shriek that might have penetrated a party wall burst from the ladies in blue as Uncle Sim wildly seizing the sofa cushions, flung up the window-sash, and hurled them into the fore-court below. Music-stool, canterbury, ottoman, squab, vases, lustres, shovel, poker, tongs, broom, and kettle-holder, followed in rapid succession, and Uncle Sim was about raising the chair of state occupied by his stupendous consort, when a familiar voice startled him, and, looking up, he beheld his old friend Butterfield and his nephew Josiah, who were standing by his own fireside, and laughing heartily at his surprised demeanour.

“Why, Sim, you’ve been dreaming,” exclaimed Mr. Butterfield; “had a cucumber, I suppose, for supper?”

“Thank fortune it’s no worse!” replied Uncle Sim, wiping his forehead. “I fancied, Josey, that I was married to Mrs. Mountelephant.”

And he then proceeded to relate, with some degree of agitation, the fearful vision by which his slumbers had been broken.

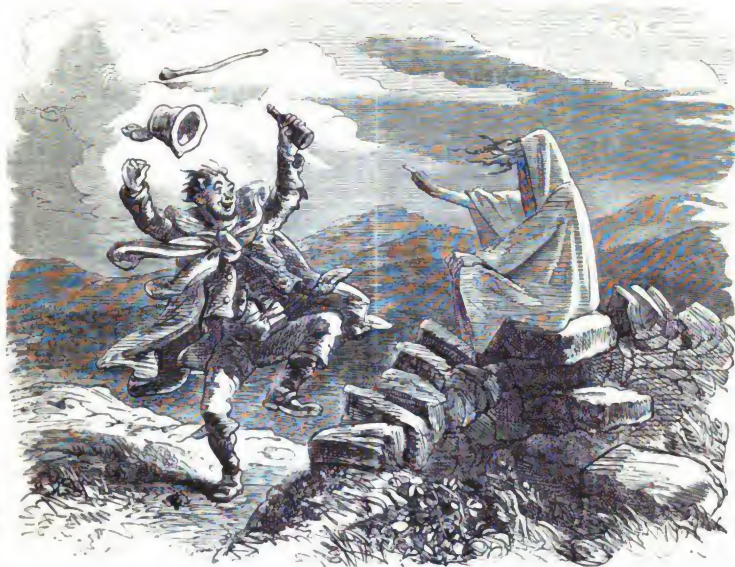
“How horrid,” said Josiah, sympathetically. “I don’t wonder at your looking so pale.”

After some further conversation upon Mrs. Mountelephant, whose name alone, as Uncle Sim observed, was enough to inspire an army with terror, Mr. Butterfield retired in order that Josiah might, as he expressed it, have a clear stage and no favour. Josiah accordingly, with modest assurance, proceeded to lay his matrimonial plans before his uncle, humbly hoping that his patron would have no objection to his union with a young lady of no fortune, but of excellent principles, and—bating a little hastiness—of sweet disposition.

“Objection,” cried Uncle Sim, joyously shaking Josiah’s hand. “I admire your courage, Josey, and will dance at your wedding, and you shall dance at mine—some day—but not just yet, Josey—not just yet.”

The young chemist and Sophy, having long had—in Josiah’s language—a “natural affinity” for each other, are now indissolubly united. Clarissa is engaged to Major K—, unattached, and Adelaide is idolised by a French artist, whose pencil has already immortalised her lofty loveliness. As for Uncle Simkinson and Mrs. Mountelephant, they are as good friends as ever, and likely long to remain so; for while declining to enlist his affections under her banner, Uncle Sim still regards that majestic woman with gallant admiration, and taking into account her knowledge of military tactics, conscientiously believes her worthy to rank with some of the oldest generals in Her Majesty’s service. A.

HOW PHIL CONSIDINE MET THE BANSHEE.



"DID yer honor ever hear tell," inquired Darby as we emerged on the direct highway to that portion of her Majesty's dominions called Cahirciveen, "of how Phil Considine met the Banshee?"

"Never!"

I leaped off the car as I answered, glad of the opportunity to stretch my aching limbs. I had penetrated so far into Darby's idiosyncrasy as likewise to know that whenever he volunteered a yarn commencing with, "Did you ever hear tell?" it was an unmistakable signal that the "baste" wanted a rest.

The shades of evening were rapidly descending, the black pall of night clothed the rugged fastnesses we had left behind us, mists rose in curling wreaths from mountain-moss and lowland lea, the last faint pencilled rays of day were glinting up the far western wave, and the plaintive howling of the kine mingled with the distant moaning of the ocean; it was just that hour of evening when the imagination feeds on the marvellous and supernatural. And as Darby threw the reins to his tired steed and strode alongside of me, I could scarcely restrain a wandering glance to each lichen-covered crag or yellow-blossomed furze brake, momentarily expecting that his wild legends would become realised by the appearance of some one of the strange beings with which he had peopled the romantic West.

"Well, thin, your honor must know," continued Darby, "that the Banshee is a quare sort of sperit, and always appears before a death in a family; it's a woman yer honor, and generally appears in the gloom of evenin, and keens to herself just like a child singin a wailful, purty, little song; and more times whin she's angry like, you could hear it risin up in the air, fearsome to hear, fitful and heart-wringin, just like the screech of a dying hare. Arrah! sure, yer honor, there isn't one of the rable ould stock at all that hasn't a Banshee in the family, sometimes appearin for misfortin, and more times whin the corpes candles are lightin; bud, bedad if she spakes to you, ye may lave yer clothes wid the first respectable naybour, and just lie down in the most convaynient spot, for go you will, and the less throuble ye give yer relations the asier they'll pray for the repose of yer soul.

"Phil Considine was a rovin sort uv blade—a regular sporter, and never could settle down to a day's mowin, rapin, or turf-cuttin in his life; bud if there was a hare to be soho'd, or a main uv cocks to be fought, or a salmon to be coaxed in sayson or out uv sayson; shure Phil the darlin was the boy to do it; and he had as many pets, betune dogs, an badgers, an saalos, an game cocks, as id set up a thravellin show-man. He was a hardy crayture, too, an would as lieve sleep out on the side uv a mountain as on the best feather-

bed in the barony; ye'd know Phil a mile off by his shamblin gate,—half throt, half walk,—his oold caubeen stuck on the back uv his head; an alpeen uv the raale mountain-ash always unaisy in his fist, and the neck uv a black bottle peepin out uv his coat, in which, he said, he carried holy-wather to defend himself agin the good people; but, bedad, it was so often impty that people began to think at last that he used to meet whole regimints uv thim: anyhow, there ye'd see Phil goin along, and divil rease the bush or tuft, that the alpeen wouldn't be shoved into, lookin for hare's' forms, and the like; and to see him settin a throut or a salmon—och! masha! it was a pictur intirely. There he'd stand away back from the bank uv the river, shadin his eyes wid his left hand, the alpeen in his right, held in the middle, as if it was the butt uv a fly-rod; his back doubled up like a rapin-hook, an his knees thrimblin backwards and forwards wid every move uv the fish; an often if ye watched him close from a hidin place, he'd get so wake in himself that he'd forget may be, and take a pull at the holy-wather bottle, all by mistake, uv coorse.

"Well, wid all, Phil was a mighty dacent poor chap, an never a crayture was lyin sick bud Phil id have a nice leverit, or may be a young grouse, or a dawshy silver salmon, an he'd lave it quiet an aisy like, at the doore airly uv a mornin, so that nobody id know where it kem from; and sure if he did snare a hare of an oold start, or run a salmon by the light uv a bog dale,—divil a one was the worse of it.

"However, sheep begun to go, an fowl roosts wor found impty uv a mornin, and tho' there was a load uv thravellin tinkers about the country, yet the strong farmers all about wor down upon poor Phil. Now, Phil was a poor divil that had a conscience, an let the thruth be towld, he had nayther hand, act, nor part in the sheep staylins or fowl sackins that was goin on, for it was an oold thief uv a horse docther, who more betoken got seven years for the same, divil's cure to him.

"Well, Phil was himself agin, an wint on wid his oold capers, an people liked him all the better, whin the times all of a sudden fell hard,—raale famine the poor craytures wor sufferin in these parts, and Phil was put to his wits'—ends to keep starvation from the doore an the life in his poor little famishin gosoons. There was a great big gomeral of a farmer lived down there by the river, over where yer honor sees the big white house beyant!"

"Ay, Darby,—I see it!"

"His name was Pat Flaherty, yer honor, an he was a cousin german uv that same poor Con Flaherty that I remimbered yer honor uv a while ago!"

"Anan!"

"He was a cruel, selfish, bosthoon, he hadn't an Irish heart about him, at all at all; an tho' he had bread, butther an tay, full an plinty, he'd grudge a crumb the size of a midge's wing.

"One evenin Phil was womasin home sad an weary enough, for the childther hadn't tasted a meal's-mate for two days, an a couple of his naybours wor almost in the dead grips for fair want of food; just as he kem down the boreen by

the ind uv Pat Flaherty's house, out jumps an illigant, bewtifully fat hooriaheen uv a pig; Phil's heart lepped into his mouth, an his teeth began to wather, an bits of pork wid a selvage uv cabbage begun dancin before his eyes, an every grunt the pig id let as he capered on, stickin his snout first in one sod and thin in another, and thin kicking up his crubeens, an gallopin like mad, med Phil fairly beside himself wid tempta-tion; so Phil repated the Pather, and an office agin the snares uv the evil one; but, begor, it was all up with the poor fellow, for the pig kep grun-tin at him, and squintin quite knowin like wid his little grey winky eyes, until, at last, Phil whips off his coateen, an 'hoorishes' to the pig.

"Grunt—grunt—squeak—squeak! says the pig; and, bedad, whilst ye'd squeeze a gooseberry Phil whips the coat round his head, claps him undther his arm, and away wid him down along the river, an across the bog, runnin like a thorough-bred at the Curragh, an dodgin like a rat in a haggard.

"Oh faix, it was short work wid poor squeakeen whin onst Phil had him housed; he was kilt, an divided betune the childther an the starvin nay-bours, an divil as much as a bristle or a bone, a tail or a tusk ever tould who tasted the pig.

"Och! ye may be shure, yer honor, there was Millia-murder at Pat's whin the pig was missed; the whole barony was sarched, for Flaherty was cruel vindictive in his way, but sight nor light uv the grunther never was found.

"Phil, as I said before, yer honor, had a conscience, an id was very seave on him; divil a sod he could pass that he didn't think he saw the pig's snout sticking out uv id, an every moan on the breeze seemed like a dyin grunt; for ye see it was the first civilised animal he ever come by in an undtherhand sort uv way: oh! no, yer honor—Phil was very high in that respect: I wont say the same uv the wild basties uv the field; for shure, as he used to say, 'God Almighty gave them for everybody's use;' an as to a pack uv grouse, or a wisp uv snipe, or snarin a scutty tail, begor, he'd sweep 'em the same as a live coal would a turf clamp.

"Phil daren't go to Father Doolin; for Pat Flaherty was great in the dunes, and the fat geese, or the tindher turkey, much less a golden erook of butther, or a creel of the raale red-bog turf, was never wantin whin the coadjutor gev the wink; so he was afeard to say boo to a bulrush, for he knew that 'Pauden More' had his suspicions uv him, an the fate uv the horse-docther was nothin to the thransportation that my poor Phil id get, if he was found out.

"One evenin just like this, yer honor, Phil was comin down by the oold castle uv Rosscarberry, a great oold thoroughould, too, an a bad spot to be near at nightfall; for the oold chiefsaints, they say, walks about there still, and many is the quare sight and sound I heerd tell uv the same spot. Well, yer honor, as I was sayin, Phil was comin along purty brisk, whin just as he got near the stile by the oold tower, the sight left his eyes a'most; for there sittin undther the withered branch of the eldther three, was—divil rease the doubt—the Banshee herself, ay, thrue enough; dusky white,

and croonin away, as she rocked backwards and forwards, wid her arms restin on her knees.

"Phil's heart was goin thump—thump—thug—thug—that you might hear it a mile off, his jaw hung loose an thrimblin like the dewlap of a cow, every bone in his body shook and rattled like a bladder full uv pays, an his knees wor playin hide and go seek wid one another.

"Phil Considine!" says the Banshee.

"Hoo-ho-oo!" blurted out Phil, fallin down on his marrow-bones.

"Phil Considine!" says the Banshee.

"Holy Mary uv Aigty!" began Phil.

"Howld yer tongue!" says the sperit, "an attind to me!"

"Y—y—yis, Mam!" says Phil, takin a pull at the holy-wather bottle.

"Phil Considine!" says the Banshee. "I've been watchin yer goins on!"

"Seven Pathers and eight Aves for the repose uv yer poor sainted sow!" whimpers Phil.

"Phil!" says the sperit. "I've been watchin ye, an there's somethin heavy on yer conscience!"

"All the way to the Cross uv Coppla, wid pays in my brogues!" groans Phil.

"Confess at onst!" says the Banshee, wid a screech that made the ould tower rock agin, whilst the leaves on the eldther shook and rattled like tundther, an a big white owl flew out wid a whoop that made the hair of Phil's head stand uv an ind.

"Whoo-o-o-o!" cries Phil. "I stole a pig!" says he.

"Ye stole a pig, ye murtherin vagabond!" says she.

"I did, ma'am, av ye plaze, an be marcful—be marcful—an give uv a long day to repint uv the same!"

"Oh—hoo—hoo!" says she, wid a wailful croon, "an who did ye stole the pig from, ye misfortunate craythure!"

"Pat Flaherty!" moans Phil.

"What—ye stole a pig from Pat Flaherty; the good—pious, Pat Flaherty, that attinds to his devotions, an takes care uv his clargy: go directly and restore the dacin't man his pig!"

"Begor, I can't!" says Phil, gettin bould wid another awig of the holy-wather. "Begor, I can't, mam," says he, "for we ate the pig!"

"Oh, ye haythen sinner!" says the sperit, "ye onlooky thievin naygur! See here, now, Phil Considine!" says she, an she lifts up her hood, an her eyes glowered out at him like two stars in the middle of a winnowin sheet. "Mark my words!" says she.

"Yis, ma'am!" says Phil.

"The day uv judgemint 'ill come!" says she.

"Thrus for you, alanna!" answers Phil.

"I'll be there!" says she.

"More glory to you, ma'am!" says Phil, taking another throw uv the black bottle.

"An you'll be there?" says she.

"Id's myself 'ill be proud to meet you, anyhow,—hic—hiccup!" says Phil.

"An Pat Flaherty 'ill be there!" says she.

"Ugh the dirty b—b—baete!" says Phil.

"An the pig 'ill be there!" says she.

"Whoo—be jakers! Banshee jewel, I have

id!" yells Phil, flingin away the alpeen and the bottle. "I'll say, 'there Pat Flaherty—there's yer pig!'"

W. C.



A TERRIBLE REVENGE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

OF our pleasant party at The Elms last Christmas, Kate O'Hara was the beauty, far away. I remember our little silence of admiration as she came into the drawing-room just before dinner was announced (for your prima donna does not care to enter until the house is full), and the great sensation her arrival made, though she could not have approached more quietly or meekly if she had been the cat. Half-a-dozen young ladies who, before her advent, looked pretty enough, suddenly became quite uninteresting to a corresponding number of bachelors, and even we married gentlemen paused awhile in our talk of shorthorns to steal an admiring glance. We had resumed our bovine conversation, and were diverging, if I remember aright, in the direction of the Prince Consort's pigs, when my wife came up to me, and whispered:

"That's little Kate O'Hara!"

Why did my cheek glow and my heart throb? Why did the name of one whom I had not seen since she was a little child recall at once the crowning happiness and chief confusion of my life?

It shall be told, terribly, anon.

The six bachelors "entered themselves" immediately for "the O'Hara stakes," as one of them was subsequently pleased to designate the dreaming of Love's young dream; and two of them—a middy and an under-graduate—got the start, and made the running at the most reckless pace I ever saw. Indeed, the sailor proposed on the third evening, and was declined with such good-natured cheerfulness that he seemed to be rather pleased than otherwise; whereas the collegian, who was of a poetical turn, took his refusal, the day following, very seriously to heart, and passed the remaining part of his visit in sorrow and the shrubberies. Two other competitors, unattached (except to Kate), were disposed of at an archery

ball; and the race then lay between Charley Northcote, captain of hussars, and Philip Lee, curate.

It was a grand set-to—"hands up," I can tell you. If Charley had the handsomest face, and, playing with a bullet pendent from his watch-chain, but which had previously resided in his leg, could talk of the time "when I was in the Crimes," Philip had the more intellectual expression, and had won at Oxford the under-graduate's "blue ribbon"—the Newdegate prize for English verse. Charley, it is true, when we were skating on the lake, produced upon the ice such wondrous "eagles" as Audubon never dreamed of; but he was, on the other hand, the first to own, when the frost broke up, that, "in a really good

thing with hounds, there was not one of them could catch the parson." For Philip, though he did not hunt in his own parish, could "go like a bird" out of it, whenever he could get a mount.

CHAPTER II.

ON the night before our party separated, we had a grand performance of charades, and, in the last of these, the Reverend Mr. Lee had won immense applause as a ferocious captain of banditti, acting with the greatest enthusiasm, and having composed for himself, with the co-operation of a cork, a pair of moustachios, which rivalled Charley's. We were to appear at supper in our charade costumes, and were waiting the



announcement of that refection, when I noticed an extraordinary phenomenon which caused me instantly and earnestly to whisper to Miss O'Hara, "I have something to say to you. Come at once."

We passed unnoticed from the crowded drawing-room into the library, still littered with our theatrical properties. Seizing a dagger, and

assuming a characteristic scowl (I was attired as a brigand's assistant), I bade her "Listen!" And she (I see her now in her pretty hat and cloak, for she had represented in our last scene the young English countess stopped by the robbers), ever ready for burlesque and mirth—as she supposed all this to be—made answer, solemnly,

"Say on."

"Twelve years ago, Catherine O'Hara, I wooed and won in the home of your childhood the lady who is now my wife. On a sweet summer's eve I told my love, sitting under an acacia, and upon a garden-seat the property of your respected sire. Hard by, you, then a little child, were swinging in a swing. Those same long silken Irish lashes drooped over those deep blue eyes, and we never dreamed that you took note of us, sealing, in the usual manner, our vows of mutual love. Judge, then, how intense our agony, how complete and awful our abasement, when, as we rejoined the festive throng for coffee, you cried aloud for all to hear :—

" 'Oh, mama! those two did so kiss each other, when I was swinging in the elm!'

"For twelve years, Kate O'Hara, the memory of that humiliation has troubled my indignant soul; but, at last, I am avenged—*look here!*"

I held before her one of the hand looking-glasses which lay on the table near, and she was preparing to say something in the dramatic style, as she snatched it from me with the proud air of a tragedy queen, when her eye caught the reflection of her face, and in a moment that fair countenance was blanched and pale, and she stood, with her head drooping, speechless. For upon her lip, reader, she saw, as I had seen, the certain sign and trace that, in some obscure corner behind the scenes, *the race had been decided for the "O'Hara Stakes," and that the Brigand Lee had won.*

"Kate," I said, "you cannot be vexed with me, for I congratulate you with all my heart. May you be as happy, dear girl, with our friend the Robber as 'those two' have been happy, whom you saw 'so kissing one another,' from beneath those silken lashes as you sat swinging in the elm."

H.